

## JASON AND CHEIRON: THE MYTH OF PINDAR'S FOURTH PYTHIAN

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NOTHING from the extant remains of Greek lyric is more impressive than Pindar's Fourth Pythian Ode. It is the longest complete poem remaining from the period between the epic and Attic tragedy. Even in the Pindaric corpus it stands unique in its length and unsurpassed in its brilliance. Thirteen full triads make it well over twice as long as its closest rivals, which have only five. Of these thirteen triads eight are devoted to the story of Jason and the Argonautic expedition. This, the first surviving version of the myth in European literature, is told with an amplitude of detail astonishing for Pindar. Moreover, the notorious difficulties of the Pindaric style—allusiveness, extreme compression, subtlety of transition—are, if not totally absent, less sensed than elsewhere, and the intrinsic interest of the story, ever one of the most popular of the Greek myths, combines with the vividness of the individual scenes to produce an effect especially splendid. Pindar has given us other poems equally dazzling within a smaller compass, perhaps, but no other where the impression left by the central myth is so memorable.

And yet, despite the relative absence of obscurities in a poem of such proportions, real problems have arisen when critics have attempted to relate the myth of the poem to the occasion of its composition and performance. If we are not to agree with the scholiast that the work simply suffers from a lengthy digression which occupies the bulk of the poem,<sup>1</sup> or to abandon with Wilamowitz the attempt to seek any unity in the work,<sup>2</sup> we must try to understand the function of the myth in its context. About the addressee of the ode and the reason for its composition we know a fair amount, most of it ascertainable from the words of the poet himself. A brief rehearsal of the known facts will be helpful here.

*Pythians* 4 and 5 were both written to commemorate the victory of King Arkesilas of Cyrene in the chariot race at Delphi in 462 B.C. The Fifth Pythian is, correctly speaking, the actual victory ode for the king. The Fourth, a much longer poem, says almost nothing about the victory. The victory is, in fact, only the ostensible reason for the ode, the real reason, which emerges in the last two triads, being to advance a plea on behalf of a banished subject whose name, Damophilos, is told to us by the

<sup>1</sup>A. B. Drachmann, *Scholia Vetera in Pindari Carmina* 2 (Leipzig 1910) 92.

<sup>2</sup>U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Pindaros* (Berlin 1922) 384, speaks of "die lange Erzählung der Argofahrt, in jeder Hinsicht ein Hors d'oeuvre, von der sich Pindar doch nur wieder gewaltsam zu Kyrene zurückfindet, 261." See also his further comments 392.

poet in line 281.<sup>3</sup> Damophilos, it is clear from the poem, had spent part of his exile in Thebes, where he had known Pindar (299) and had enlisted the poet's support in his attempt to secure his recall to North Africa. It is unclear whether the ode was commissioned officially by a member of the royal house, in which case Pindar will have taken advantage of the opportunity to introduce something which his patron is unlikely to have requested,<sup>4</sup> or whether it was a peace offering on a magnificent scale from the refugee who had himself asked for the poem and paid the poet.<sup>5</sup>

It is precisely this plea for the recall of a political exile with which the poem ends that makes the choice of myth somewhat surprising. King Arkesilas claimed descent from one of the Argonauts, Euphamos: hence the tale of the quest for the Golden Fleece is legitimately part of the history of the royal house of Cyrene.<sup>6</sup> Euphamos, of no particular importance in other accounts of the voyage of the Argo, is especially prominent in the Pindaric version. It is he who, on the return of the Argonauts with Medea from Colchis, receives from a mysterious stranger in North Africa a clod of earth which betokens a return by his descendants to that continent. Much of the first three triads of the poem is an explanation, cast in the form of a prophecy by Medea to the crew of the Argo, of just how the pledge will be redeemed in the colonization of Cyrene by Battos of Thera seventeen generations later (10). And eighth in line from Battos is the ruling monarch whom Pindar addresses.

The theme of return (*νόστος*) is certainly emphasized throughout the poem. We hear of the return of the Argonauts to their fatherland (32), of the desire of the soul of Phrixos to be escorted back to the country whence he departed on the miraculous Golden Ram, much against his will (159–162), of the desire of Jason to be reinstated on the throne of his

<sup>3</sup>The common belief (see, e.g., A. Boeckh, *Pindari Opera* 2.2 [Leipzig 1821] 264–265; Wilamowitz [above, n. 2] 376) that Damophilos was a kinsman of the king rests entirely on a notice in the scholia (Drachmann [above, n. 1] 163): *ἦν δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ πρὸς γένους*. It may be nothing more than an inference based on the fact that the poet emphasizes the relationship between Jason and Pelias, the two chief figures in the central portion of the myth (e.g., lines 142–145). But the notice is unclear, for *αὐτῷ* can and has been taken to mean that Damophilos was related to Pindar (see Wilamowitz 376, esp. note 2). The exact nature of the rebellion in which Damophilos was involved is unclear too. Some, seeing significance in the name of the exile, have assumed that it was a democratic rebellion (e.g., H. T. Wade-Gery and C. M. Bowra, *Pindar: Pythian Odes* [London 1928] 102); others (e.g., B. L. Gildersleeve, *Pindar: The Olympian and Pythian Odes* [New York 1885] 278) have believed that it was an aristocratic uprising. The latter view has found recent support from F. Chamoux, *Cyrène sous la Monarchie des Battiades* (Paris 1953) 195–198.

<sup>4</sup>Chamoux (above, n. 3) 178–179.

<sup>5</sup>Gildersleeve (above, n. 3) 278, who also thinks, 280, that an ode of such length must have cost a fancy price.

<sup>6</sup>Boeckh (above, n. 3) 281, argued that Damophilos was descended from Jason, thereby seeking to establish an even stronger link between the myth and the occasion of the poem.

ancestral kingdom which he too had been forced to leave (109–116). Even the colonization of Cyrene is seen as a return to a Promised Land.<sup>7</sup> Perfectly appropriate in a poem which ends with an appeal for the recall of an exile to his native land. But herein lies the difficulty. For the mythical paradigm which Pindar proposes to his audience appears to be that of a chivalrous young hero deprived of his rights by a tyrannical king. A *prima facie* identification of King Arkesilas with King Pelias and of Damophilos with Jason seems almost inevitable. It also seems intolerable, of course, for Arkesilas is hardly likely to have been delighted with a pointed suggestion that in banishing a countryman he has behaved as did Pelias in despatching the gallant Jason on a mission meant to ensure that the king need never again be troubled by the meddlesome upstart.<sup>8</sup>

Commentators have not ignored this problem. Indeed, much of the modern criticism of the poem has been concerned with attempting to show that the import of the myth is not offensive to the addressee. In Jason we have the most detailed portrait in all of Pindar. Is he a type of the exiled Damophilos longing to be restored to his patrimony, as a naive reading might imply, or can we see in him an idealized version of the king? Those who have been inclined to see Damophilos in Jason have been at pains to point out the harsh lesson that Arkesilas might learn from Pindar's presentation. Boeckh, for instance, while insisting that no invidious comparison of Damophilos and Arkesilas was intended by the myth, still thought that Pindar was showing the king an example of a tyrant come to a bad end at the hands of one deprived of his rights and sent away, and was warning the king against duplicating the fate of Pelias.<sup>9</sup> Those, and in recent years they have been the majority, who have looked to find the possible links between Jason and Arkesilas have emphasized the character of the Pindaric hero rather than the personal opposition between the two chief figures in the myth: Jason is courteous and conciliatory and bases his claim to the throne on divine right (105–108), as do the Battiads of Cyrene (51, 63, 260).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup>The *πόστος* theme is noted by R. W. B. Burton, *Pindar's Pythian Odes* (Oxford 1962) 168, 173, and by C. A. P. Ruck and W. H. Matheson, *Pindar: Selected Odes* (Ann Arbor, Michigan 1968) 19.

<sup>8</sup>Gildersleeve, in a slightly different context (the interpretation of the parable of Oedipus at lines 263–270), notes that the equation of Arkesilas and Pelias, Damophilos and Jason is "monstrous" ([above, n. 3] 302).

<sup>9</sup>*Op.cit.* (above, n. 3) 264–265, 281. So too F. Mezger, *Pindars Siegeslieder* (Leipzig 1880) 219: "wie nahe lag die Gefahr, dass der verbitterte Verbannte einem künftigen Aufstand in Kyrene seine mächtige Unterstützung lieh, wenn er plötzlich wie Jason zurückkehrte."

<sup>10</sup>The views of the nineteenth-century critics are conveniently summarized in Mezger (above, n. 9) 204–205. Of more recent critics, Wilamowitz (above, n. 2) sees no special connection between the myth and the plea for Damophilos' recall. G. Norwood, *Pindar* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1947) is equally silent on the matter; so too are R. L.

It is not surprising that commentators should have sought to explain the similarities between the mythical *exempla* of Jason and Pelias and the principals in the quarrel in Cyrene. For there is an obvious parallel of situation between the two pairs. In addition there is the necessity of accounting for Pindar's way of telling the story of the voyage of the Argo. Pindar in the Fourth Pythian comes closer, it is true, than does any other Greek poet in any surviving work to answering Quintilian's famous description (10.1.62) of Stesichorus as *clarissimos canentem duces et epici carminis onera lyra sustinentem*, but despite the epic theme and unusual length of this choral ode the treatment of the myth is totally lyric and characteristically Pindaric, with the story told in a succession of *tableaux vivants* rather than by discursive, ongoing narrative. And at the very heart of the poem we find Jason facing Pelias. Far from avoiding any confrontation between the two, Pindar elevates their encounter to a position of pre-eminence in his long poem. It is the main canvas in an exhibition of pictures paraded before our eyes and the one which King Arkesilas, like ourselves, will probably have found most impressive.<sup>11</sup> The two figures, Jason and Pelias, are held up for the king to view and he is left to reflect on them. If analogies could be sought between the antagonists of the legendary past and those of the contemporary dispute in Cyrene, the two portraits could equally well be viewed *per se*, without necessary external reference. Or, at least, the only reference might be left for the king to create by voluntary association, through similarity of behaviour, with one or other of the two actors in the central *tableau*. This too would be in the best Pindaric manner. At the very end of the First Pythian, addressed like the Fourth to a reigning monarch on the fringes of the Hellenic world, Pindar had offered the examples Croesus and Phalaris to Hiero for his consideration. There we have only brief sketches, not the full portraits of the Fourth Pythian. But their import, and Pindar's

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Farnell, *The Works of Pindar* (London 1930–32); G. Méautis, *Pindare le Dorien* (Neuchâtel 1962); C. M. Bowra, *Pindar* (Oxford 1964). R. Lattimore, *CW* 42 (1948) 19–25, sees the dominant motif as one of the folly of delay and, with this, the necessity of decisive action at the opportune moment: the restoration of Jason's patrimony, like that of Damophilos, has been too long put off (22–23). But Lattimore warns against the identification of Jason with Damophilos that this might seem to imply. By offering Jason as a model of gentlemanly behaviour for the king Pindar more than redresses the balance (23–24). So too Burton (above, n. 7) 168, who in addition feels it necessary to warn against the temptation to read the myth as a parable. Despite Burton's warning, and with obvious awareness of the inherent difficulty, F. Sandgren, *Eranos* 70 (1972) 12–22, pleads, albeit briefly, for the Jason = Damophilos, Pelias = Arkesilas theory as "noch einiger Gedanken wert" (18).

<sup>11</sup>J. Duchemin, *Pindare: Pythiques III, IX, IV, V* (Paris 1967) 98, compares the ode to a Doric pediment with the statues of Pelias and Jason centrally placed. Chamoux, (above, n. 3) 190, divides the myth into four sections, the first of which, the visit to Pelias (lines 71–168), is, he remarks, as long as the other three together.

preference, are clear enough. Croesus is remembered with affection while posterity accords only its hatred to Phalaris. Hiero may be remembered either way and is fully free to choose which reputation he will enjoy. Not dissimilarly, Arkesilas has two models set before him.

It is likely that Arkesilas will have found the picture of Jason more attractive than that of Pelias.<sup>12</sup> Is there any indication that Pindar is asking the king to take Jason to heart in a special way, or does he simply leave him to contemplate the alternatives without deliberately nudging him in one direction? In the First Pythian the poet's priorities would be evident even without direct recommendation of one choice over the other. The pictures speak for themselves.

So they do in the Fourth Pythian, to a great extent, but there is something very particular that Pindar and Jason have to say to Arkesilas that commentators have generally not noticed. That this is something dear to both Pindar and Jason there can be little doubt, for they both tell us as much.

Jason begins and ends his first speech with mention of the centaur Cheiron. His very first concern is to state that he is proud bearer of Cheiron's teaching; his last words introduce Cheiron again, this time not as the one who gave him his education but as him who was responsible for his very name (102, 119):

Φαμί διδασκαλίαν Χείρωνος οἴσειν.  
φήρ δέ με θεῖος Ἰάσονα κικλήσκων προσαύδα.

The exact nature of the teaching of Cheiron has been variously interpreted. The scholiast understood it to be *ἡ ἀλήθεια*;<sup>13</sup> Gildersleeve took it to be "reverence for Zeus, and reverence for one's parents," using *Pyth.* 6.23–27 to shed light on this passage.<sup>14</sup> No doubt Cheiron, as the great preceptor of young heroes, did include truth and reverence for gods and parents in the curriculum of his academy. To these might be added good manners in dealing with the fair sex, for Jason goes on to say in his speech

<sup>12</sup>The first words of Pelias (97–100) are generally taken as disrespectful if not positively insulting and have, more than anything else in the poem, cast Pelias in an unfavourable light. But there is room for doubt whether they should be so taken: see P. Shorey, *CP* 25 (1930) 280–281; Burton (above, n. 7) 155. If Shorey is correct and Pelias' words are not uncomplimentary, the comparison between Pelias and Jason is not so invidious as that between Croesus and Phalaris in the First Pythian.

<sup>13</sup>Drachmann (above, n. 1) 123.

<sup>14</sup>*Op. cit.* (above, n. 3) 291. As Gildersleeve remarks, 318, the passage in the Sixth Pythian in all likelihood alludes to the *Ἱποθήκαι Χείρωνος* or *Precepts of Cheiron*, a series of didactic aphorisms attributed to Hesiod. Almost nothing of this work has come down to us: R. Merkelbach and M. L. West, *Fragmenta Hesiodica* (Oxford 1967) give only one direct quotation as certainly from this work (fr. 283), lines preserved by the scholiast on the Sixth Pythian. On the *Ἱποθήκαι Χείρωνος* see W. Jaeger, *Paideia*<sup>2</sup> 1 (Oxford 1945) 25, 194.

that he has never behaved churlishly or spoken in a manner offensive to the mother, the wife, or the daughters of Cheiron.

But Pindar informs us in two other poems about Cheiron's teaching, and it seems clear that one aspect of it was of outstanding significance to him. In the sublime Third Pythian, intended to console the ailing Hiero of Syracuse, Pindar mentions the education of Asclepius at the hands of the old centaur. Apollo snatched his son from the womb of Coronis on her funeral pyre and committed him to Cheiron's care (45-46):

καὶ ῥά νιν Μάγνητι φέρων πόρε Κενταύρω διδάξαι  
πολυμήμονας ἀνθρώποισιν ἰᾶσθαι νόσους.

It is precisely this act of healing that Pindar himself would like to be able to perform for Hiero with the gift of the poem which he is offering him. In the Third Nemean we are told (43 ff.) of the education of Achilles, another of Cheiron's distinguished pupils. Pindar says, in a particularly revealing passage (53-55):

βαθυμήτα Χίρων τράφε λιθίνῳ  
Ἴάσον' ἔνδον τέγει, καὶ ἔπειτεν Ἀσκλαπιόν,  
τὸν φαρμάκων δίδαξε μαλακόχειρα νόμον.

Once again he mentions healing as the teaching of the master. And he reminds us that Jason was educated by the same tutor as was the god of healing. The tradition that Cheiron taught healing to his pupils is well-established: in the *Iliad* we are told that Achilles learned about ἥπια φάρμακα from Cheiron (11.832),<sup>15</sup> as did Asclepius (4.218-219). Healing, then, appears to have been a regular part of Cheiron's teaching.

It has often been remarked that Jason's very name calls attention to this aspect of Cheiron's instruction.<sup>16</sup> That the name Jason meant "The Healer" for Pindar seems quite likely from the consideration that Pindar's

<sup>15</sup>Cf. too the red-figured kylix by Sosias, ca 500 B.C., in the Staatliche Museen, Berlin, with Achilles tending the wound of Patroclus: M. Grant and J. Hazel, *Who's Who in Classical Mythology* (London 1973) 317.

<sup>16</sup>E.g., G. S. Kirk, *Myth: Its Meaning and Functions in Ancient and Other Cultures* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1970) 159; A. Brelich, *Gli eroi greci: Un problema storico-religioso* (Rome 1958) 117, 197, who argues that the cult of Jason is in origin one of healing, hence the name of the hero. So too O. Jessen, *RE* 9 (1916) 759: "Der Name (von ἰᾶσθαι) kennzeichnet I. als alten Heilgott . . . , wie man schon im Altertum erzählte, Chiron habe I. die Heilkunst gelehrt und ihm den Namen I. = ἰατρός gegeben (Pind. Pyth. IV 119 nebst Schol. 211. Schol. Apoll. Rhod. I 554)." J. Pinsent, *Greek Mythology* (New York 1969) 79, calls attention to the famous kylix by Douris in the Museo Gregoriano Etrusco in the Vatican: "if Jason was swallowed and regorged by the snake it suggests that his quest was, as befits a man whose name is 'Healer', for immortality, and that he . . . died and was rejuvenated. Vases . . . often depict earlier versions of a myth than are preserved in the literary tradition."

Cheiron not only taught the art of healing but also chose the name to be worn by the bearer of his teaching.<sup>17</sup>

Names were fraught with meaning for Pindar. In the Fourth Pythian Medea alludes to her skill and her name (μήδεσιν . . . ἀμοῖς, 27) just as does Jason.<sup>18</sup> The name of Cheiron appears to have been a *nom parlant* for the poet too: it is hard to escape seeing an allusion to Cheiron's name in the μαλακόχειρα of *Nem.* 3.55.<sup>19</sup> That Cheiron's name actually does come from the word χεῖρ is generally accepted.<sup>20</sup> Pindar's etymology is thus perfectly correct. It would matter little if it were not, though, for what is important is only what he appears to have seen in a name, not the philological accuracy of the derivation.

Cheiron, He of the Skillful Hands, is the teacher of Jason, The Healer. A pupil of Cheiron's will be adept in the work of hands and it is very likely that his skill will be therapeutic.<sup>21</sup> And so there is a wonderful resonance to the words of the poet when he addresses Arkesilas directly (270–271):

ἐσσί δ' ἰατὴρ ἐπικαιρότατος, Παιάν τέ σοι τιμᾶ φάος  
χρὴ μαλακὰν χέρα προσβάλλοντα τρώμαν ἔλκεος ἀμφιπολεῖν

<sup>17</sup>Corroboration is offered by the scholiast (Drachmann [above, n. 1] 127): παρὸ ἱατρὸς ἦν, τὸν ἐκτραφέντα ὑπ' αὐτοῦ φερωνύμως Ἰάσονα ἐκάλεσε παρὰ τὴν ἴασιν. Nowhere in Pindar is it suggested that Cheiron chose the names of his other wards. It is all the more likely, then, that the name deliberately assigned has special meaning. Apollodorus (3.13.7) claims that the centaur gave Achilles his name of "Not Lips" (from α-privative and χεῖλη "lips") because the child fed on the entrails of wild animals and had never put his lips to the breast. This grotesque explanation appears to be original with Apollodorus.

<sup>18</sup>Other obvious examples of punning are ζαθέων ἱερῶν ἐπώνυμε πάτερ of fr. 105 Snell<sup>3</sup> and the name Iamos of *Ol.* 6 (from ἰός, 47, and ἴον, 55). For other interesting possibilities see Norwood (above, n. 10) 125 (on Ἰσμήνιον) and 131 (on Θήρων). H. Lloyd-Jones, *JHS* 93 (1973) 129, esp. n. 117, discusses the tremendous significance Pindar attributes to names, while F. Sandgren, (above, n. 10) 14–15, points out that Jason, in his first speech to Pelias, carefully avoids announcing his name until the very end, thereby giving a "fast mystische Bedeutung" to his revelation. Sandgren does not suggest what that meaning might be.

<sup>19</sup>Cf. J. B. Bury, *The Nemean Odes of Pindar* (London 1890) 56.

<sup>20</sup>E.g., C. Robert, *RE* 3 (1899) 2302; H. Frisk, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* 2 (Heidelberg 1970) 1083. Among modern editors Snell-Maehler and Bowra print Χίρων, Turyn Χείρων in the text of Pindar. Both appear to be attested forms even before Pindar's time: see P. Kretschmer, *Glotta* 10 (1920) 58–62; M. L. West, *Hesiod: Theogony* (Oxford 1966) 431.

<sup>21</sup>Robert, *RE* 3. 2302, calls Cheiron "der Gott der schmerzmildernden, kunstgewandten Hand." The work of hands that Cheiron taught could be the alleviation of pain, but it could also be the skills of hunting or spearmanship in the case of an Achilles, as the passage from *Nem.* 3 proves. It is interesting to observe that in the Ninth Pythian Apollo asks Cheiron if he may lay his hand upon Cyrene (36):

δσῖα κλυτὰν χέρα οἱ προσενεγκεῖν

Apollo is, throughout this passage, another young pupil of Cheiron's, as L. Woodbury has

Ἰατὴρ recalls Ἰάσων and μαλακὰν χέρα, like μαλακόχειρα of *Nem.* 3.55, the διδασκαλία, indeed the very name, of Cheiron.<sup>22</sup> The laying-on of hands is apposite to Arkesilas not so much because "his kingdom of Libya is the mythological child of that Epaphos who was born of Io by the touch of Zeus,"<sup>23</sup> but because Arkesilas can show himself to be in fact what Jason is in name—a healer—and can reveal, through the use of his hands, the teaching of Cheiron. The wound on which he is asked to place his hand is a wound in the body politic.<sup>24</sup> He can make that body sound again by recalling and being reconciled to Damophilos, himself suffering from the terrible disease (οὐλομέναν νοῦσον, 293) of exile as a result of his quarrel with the king.

Cyrene was famous in antiquity for its physicians. It is noteworthy that Apollo is called Παιάν, or Healer, in the Fourth Pythian (270) and that its companion piece, the Fifth, mentions the healing power of Apollo of Cyrene (63–64). Herodotus says (3.131) that the physicians of Cyrene were the most renowned in the Greek world after those of Croton,<sup>25</sup> and a fine bas-relief, dated by Chamoux to the second quarter of the fifth century, thus exactly contemporary with the Fourth Pythian, shows a doctor healing a patient by the imposition of hands on the patient's shoulder.<sup>26</sup> The mysterious plant silphium which made the fame of

pointed out, *TAPA* 103 (1972) 561–573. Is this further proof of the fact? For a pupil of the centaur will best show his education by the use he makes of his hands. H. Fränkel, *Dichtung und Philosophie des frühen Griechentums*<sup>2</sup> (Munich 1962) 503 n. 4, has suggested that the word ἀπείραντος which Apollo uses of the ἀλκά of the maid Cyrene at line 35 of this passage means "unerfüllbar": the virginal Cyrene, like Atalanta in a strikingly similar passage in Theognis (1287–1294), has hitherto shunned marriage, the natural τέλος of women. She is thus "unfulfilled," as we would put it, and the god is proposing to remedy the girl's deficiency by translating her to North Africa where she will bear him a child. On this interpretation the context of Apollo's questions at *Pyth.* 9. 35–37 would be medical, for the laying-on of hands would heal or make whole. But even if Fränkel's interpretation of ἀπείραντος is not accepted, we still see Apollo making an inquiry of the master with regard to a matter of χειρουργία.

<sup>22</sup>Of commentators only G. Fraccaroli, *Le Odi di Pindaro* (Verona 1894) 410 is aware of the significance of Jason's name for this passage. He does not, however, make anything of the probable allusion to Cheiron.

<sup>23</sup>Ruck and Matheson (above, n. 7) 25. Medea mentions Epaphos at line 14, it is true, but it is Aeschylus (*PV* 848–852), not Pindar, who suggests an etymology for the name. In the Ninth Pythian, where the motif of touch is often repeated (11, 120, in addition to 36), no mention is made of Epaphos.

<sup>24</sup>The word ἔλκος was first used in a metaphorical sense by Archilochus, fr. 13.8 West: see D. E. Gerber, *Euterpe* (Amsterdam 1970) 18. Archilochus also uses the word ἰᾶσθαι with reference to what we would consider a non-physical wound, fr. 11 West.

<sup>25</sup>Some editors consider this passage an interpolation, either a later addition by Herodotus himself or the work of a scholiast. See W. W. How and J. Wells, *A Commentary on Herodotus* 1 (Oxford 1912) 297. The lines are in all the manuscripts.

<sup>26</sup>Chamoux (above, n. 3) 363–368 and plate XXII.3, has a thorough discussion and photograph of the work.



Cyrene in antiquity from the very foundation of the city and which even appeared on its coins was noted in particular for its medicinal properties.<sup>27</sup> There is a special appropriateness to the introduction of the healers Jason and Cheiron into the myth of the Fourth Pythian, for the art of healing appears to have been held in high honour in the kingdom of Arkesilas. In the Seventh Olympian Pindar had let the images of growth and flowering control much of the myth and his choice of language, for these images had special meaning on the Island of Rhodes where the ode was to be performed.<sup>28</sup> Perhaps it was his knowledge of the importance attached to healing in Cyrene that led him to tell the story of the quest for the Golden Fleece in the manner he did.<sup>29</sup>

We shall never know what was Arkesilas' reaction to Pindar's tale and ensuing plea. But whether he found it agreeable or distasteful, the Fourth Pythian must have given him much to think about. And if he listened attentively he will have understood just how much Pindar was offering him. After all, to Hiero of Syracuse the poet had been able to offer immortality but no cure for his immediate affliction. Cheiron was dead, Asclepius was dead, and all hope of a healer was vain. King Arkesilas of Cyrene enjoys the same immortality as Hiero of Syracuse. And thanks to Pindar he could also derive the comfort of knowing that the power of healing, transmitted from the old centaur to his pupils, was alive and present in his own hands.

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<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.* 246-263.

<sup>28</sup>On Rhodes as a rose plant see Norwood (above, n. 10) 138-145; J. Duchemin, *Pindare: poète et prophète* (Paris 1955) 240-241; G. Lawall, *RFIC* 89 (1961) 33-47; D. C. Young, *Three Odes of Pindar* (Leiden 1968) 69 ff., esp. 76; W. J. Verdenius, *Pindar's Seventh Olympian Ode* (Amsterdam 1972) 117, 119. All critics accept some connection between growth and flowering and the island of Rhodes in *Ol.* 7, though some see it as much more pervasive than others.

<sup>29</sup>It is noteworthy in this respect that Medea is referred to as *φαρμακώσαιο*, 221, and *παμφαρμάκον*, 233, and that the Argonauts seek a *φάρμακον . . . ἀρετῆς*, 187.